



# BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT SCOPING NEWSLETTER

## Indian Creek Corridor Plan & Environmental Assessment

July 29, 2003

### Background

The Indian Creek corridor is located 50 miles southwest of Moab, Utah and 30 miles northwest of Monticello, Utah. It also borders Canyonlands National Park.



Several Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and cultural sites are included within the planning area. These specific areas include: Newspaper Rock, Bridger Jack Mesa ACEC, Shay Canyon ACEC, and Lavender Canyon ACEC. Indian Creek has a rich cultural and historical background. It has been found that the area was first inhabited roughly 12,000 years ago. Remnants of these ancient cultures still exist in the planning area. Beginning in the late 1800's, Indian Creek was part of San Juan County's booming agricultural industry. At its peak, records show that the county supported over 17,000 head of cattle. Agriculture still continues in Indian Creek, although at much less intensive levels. The Dugout Ranch is located within the planning area, and holds grazing leases on much of the Indian Creek public land.

In addition to its agricultural and cultural resources, Indian Creek serves as a haven for climbers, hikers, campers and horseback riders. It shelters sensitive natural resources, such as raptor nesting sites, wildlife corridors and habitat, and native vegetation. Some of the vegetation in Indian Creek is considered "relict" vegetation, and represents vegetation patterns of pre-settlement times. Many of these resources are becoming impacted by increasing use of the area. Protecting these resources, while accommodating human use, is a difficult job. Increasing use has other impacts, including conflicts with private property owners.

### History of Planning Process

As recreational use in Indian Creek increased in the early 1990s, it was recognized that developing a formal plan to address these various uses would be appropriate. In 2000, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) began development of an Indian Creek Corridor Plan, but the plan was never finalized. The length of intervening time, increasing use and impacts, plus new information has led to the re-initiation of the project. The BLM will again lead preparation of the plan, but this time with the assistance of Bear West, a consulting firm in Salt Lake City.



### The Planning Process

To make the best possible management decisions for Indian Creek, the BLM will rely on an evaluation tool called an environmental assessment (EA). The EA process emphasizes public participation, development of issue-driven alternatives, and evaluation of environmental impacts. The purpose of the EA is to disclose to the public, and the BLM, the environmental impacts of any proposed changes in the current management of Indian Creek use.



The following are steps that will be followed in developing the Indian Creek Corridor Plan and Environmental Assessment:

- The process begins with the identification of issues through public and agency **scoping**. The issues identified through this process will guide the rest of the analysis. This newsletter initiates the scoping period and kicks off work on the Indian Creek planning process.
- An **interdisciplinary team** (ID team) will be formed to develop a proposed action and define its purpose and need. The ID team will be composed of representatives of the interest groups identified through scoping.
- A technical **analysis** will be conducted to determine and identify any potential impacts to the environment resulting from proposed changes in the current management of Indian Creek use.
- After a thorough analysis of the potential impacts, a series of **alternatives** will be developed that will include mitigation or minimization of the adverse impacts of each alternative. Alternatives will include the proposed action and a no action alternative.
- These alternatives will be presented in a **Draft Environmental Assessment** (Draft EA).
- A **public comment period** will follow the publication of the Draft EA. The public will have an opportunity to review the Draft EA, and provide comments on its content.

### Tentative Project Schedule

Public Scoping	July 29, 2003
End of Scoping	August 28, 2003
Draft EA	September 2003
Public meetings	October 2003
Final EA	November 2003
Decision	December 2003

· Comments on the Draft EA will be considered during the preparation and finalization of the **Final Environmental Assessment** (Final EA).

· The BLM will then use the Final EA for their **decision** regarding the proposed management of the Indian Creek Corridor Plan.



### Scoping

Public participation is a key element of the environmental assessment process. Issues identified during the public scoping process define the scope of analysis presented in the EA. We want and need to hear from you.

Some preliminary issues have been identified by the public and agencies throughout the Indian Creek Corridor planning process. Please provide us your comments on these and other issues that you feel are relevant to the Indian Creek Corridor Plan and EA.

#### Preliminary Issues:

- Impacts to vegetation from agriculture and recreation
- Impacts to raptors and other wildlife from agriculture and recreation
- Impacts to private property including littering, safety, and privacy issues
- Impacts to water quality, riparian vegetation, stream bank erosion
- Impacts to visual quality and aesthetics
- Recreation and agricultural user conflicts
- Recreational user conflicts and associated social impacts
- Impacts to cultural and historical resources from agriculture and recreation
- Access to recreation sites and public lands
- Parking facility issues
- Restroom facility issues
- Law enforcement issues
- Safety issues associated with limited parking, flood risk, and falling hazard trees
- Impacts to ACECs and Wilderness Study Areas
- Impacts associated with increased camping

Please take time to either fill out the attached comment card, send a letter, or email the project consultants, Bear West, with your comments. All comments received by the public, which fall within the scope of the EA, will be considered in the preparation of the EA. Comments are due October 24, 2003.



### For Further Information

For further information please contact the project consultants, Bear West.

Ralph Becker or Laura Hanson

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We are interested in hearing what you have to say! Please use this comment card to identify any issues that you feel should be included as part of the Indian Creek Corridor study. Your comments are a vital part of the Environmental Assessment process and will be considered in the development of the Indian Creek Corridor Plan and EA

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**Thank you for your participation**

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**To Mail:** Fold this sheet in thirds making sure that the BLM mailing address is showing, tape closed, and apply proper postage.

**Bureau of Land Management**  
**Moab & Monticello Field Office**  
c/o Bear West  
145 South 400 East  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111



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Return Address



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